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THE MOUND-BUILDERS OF MANITOBA.

A few at least, if not many, of the ancient Mound-Builders of America found their way into the Canadian Northwest. On the banks of the Red River in the parish of St. Andrews, about seventeen miles north-east of Winnipeg, there is a group of four mounds, two on each side of the river. The first is on the west bank, and was originally quite large and sub-conical in shape, but one side of it was levelled down by the early settlers, in making a roadway along the fronts of their farms, and the other side has been considerably worn away by the gradual widening of the river-bed, leaving only an elliptical ridge, about 100 feet long and 10 feet high. Human bones are frequently exposed on its bared sides, especially after heavy rains, and some years ago an attempt was made to open it, which resulted in the finding of a number of skeletons and various other relics. This mound is very conspicuously situated on a high point at a sharp angle in the river, and it commands a fine view up and down stream, as well as of the surrounding country.

The second is a very small mound, and stands about a quarter of a mile back from the river-bank and nearly half a mile north of number one, in a large field of comparatively level ground. It is only three feet in height and has never been touched.

The other two mounds of this colony are situated on the opposite or east side of the river, and a little farther to the north, on a gentle slope facing the west, and perhaps forty rods from the river. They are alike in shape and size, being oval (65 feet long, 55 wide and 7 high), connected by a shallow ridge or embankment, over 300 yards in length, which was supposed to be a natural elevation, until it cracked with the drouth last summer and fell in at several points. A number of oak and poplar trees, from six to twelve inches in diameter, are still growing upon them. The most northerly one of this pair was partially opened in 1866 by the half-breed on whose land it stands, for the purpose of making a root-house, and two years ago it was further explored by members of the Historical Society of this place. Some human remains, pot-

tery, pipes and beads were taken out of it on both occasions, but nothing of any special interest has thus far been found in it.

The fourth or last one of the group, however, contained some interesting relics; such as a neck-ornament or pendant, manufactured out of a sea-shell, and with the profile of a female face engraved on one side of it—the nose is straight, the eyes are large and prominent, the mouth finely cut, and the hair made up into a long tapering cone. There is not the slightest resemblance between this and a squaw's face of the present day. The next is a small hatchet of red pipe-stone, with the outlines of a strange looking quadruped roughly cut on both sides of it, and also on one side a faint representation of some other animal like a beaver in rear and a bird in front. The third is a sort of breastplate or gorget, made of fine clay of a yellowish color. It is only about the thickness of a school slate, three inches long by eight wide, and bent almost double, with four perforated holes in each end, and the outer side marked with shallow longitudinal grooves, half an inch apart, and which are, in turn, closely though not artistically nicked crosswise, as if done while in a plastic state. The fourth is a very large stone hammer, weighing $13\frac{1}{2}$ pounds.

This mound was first opened, many years ago, by the late Hon. Donald Gunn, and it has been dug into at least a dozen times since then. I made a somewhat careful examination of it last fall, and a vertical section, near the centre, exhibited: 1. Skeleton, evidently of Mound-Builder, lying on the natural surface of the ground in horizontal position, with the head to the north and the face turned to the east. 2. About 15 inches of burnt clay, mixed with scraps of birch bark, decayed wood, charcoal and ashes. 3. Two layers of limestone flags, taken from the river bank, but only extending over the skeleton. 4. Rest of tumulus to the top being the ordinary black loam of the surrounding prairie.

In other parts of this mound a great many re-burials had been made, from one to three feet below its surface. The bones of each body were piled up separately in a round heap, and capped with the skull.

The situation of these mounds, at the foot of the St. Andrew's rapids, is exceedingly fine, but would seem to have been chosen more on economic than on either esthetic or military grounds, as the fishing at that point is always better than elsewhere in the river, and the great forests immediately to the north and east abound with all kinds of game.

THE SOURIS GROUP.

In Southwestern Manitoba, about ten miles north of the American boundary line, at the confluence of the two Antler Creeks and the Souris River, there is a large colony of interesting mounds; but, as I have not yet been able to visit that district, I can only relate what a very intelligent settler there wrote me last summer about them: "There are several mounds in this vicinity with an average height of six feet—three on section 10, two on 15, two on 22, one on 16 and one on 34, in township 2 and range 27 west, besides a number of smaller ones. The three on section 10 are connected by an embankment two feet high, eight wide and probably 150 yards long, forming a right angle like the two sides of a square. The two on section 15 also have raised walks running out on one side towards each other, but not in a straight line or touching at the points, the mounds being fully 200 yards apart. Some of the bones and relics we found were eight feet down or two feet below the level of the prairie. One skeleton near the surface had a copper band around the skull, and a bunch of hair under the band was quite fresh when I took it out, and of a jet black color, but soon turned to dirty white, and each hair is flat and coarse. All the later burials were found in a sitting posture, the knees well up to the chin, the elbows down to the hip joint, and the fore-arm laid back to the breast."

The position of this group is admirably suited for defensive purposes, the river-banks being nearly 200 feet high at that point and as a rule very steep.

THE LAKE MANITOBA GROUP.

Between Lake Manitoba and the Riding Mountains, which form the western escarpment of the Red River Valley toward the north, there is an extensive system of mounds of a somewhat different character. They are generally built at leading points along the shore of the lake and on the banks of the principal streams running into it.

The largest one of this group that I have examined, is on the south side of the White Mud river, two miles above the village of Westbourne. It is 91 feet in diameter, $8\frac{1}{2}$ in height, and circular in shape, with two peculiar approaches, like outstretched arms, on the north and south sides of it, each 300 feet long, 50 wide and 3 high. These embankments are of a uniform height till within a few yards of the mound, to the top of which they then lead by rather steep ascents.

The owner of the farm on which it stands has dug a cellar in it for storing his vegetables, and therefore did not wish me to disturb it. Some relics were found in it, but they have all been lost or given away.

The purpose of this mound is quite obvious. It is situated close beside a very important trail or highway from the lake to a large plain of pasture-land that was noted at one time for its vast herds of buffalo; and the north arm of the mound terminates on the bank of the old river-bed, thus forming a sort of permanent corral in which to catch the buffaloes: their bones are still to be seen on every side.

On the north side of the same river, and near Arden Station, there is another large mound, on the summit of a long gravel-slope. It has a regularly graded ascent on one side, and commands a wide and beautiful view of the surrounding country. To the south, as far as the eye can reach, the prairie undulates in long graceful sweeps, with numerous clumps of oak, poplar and willow, giving it the appearance of a mammoth park; and to the north, as a fitting background to such a fine landscape, the Riding Mountains loom up at a distance of ten to fifteen miles, heavily covered with spruce and tamarac in sombre hues.

OTHER MOUNDS.

A large number of mounds are to be met with around the smaller lakes, and especially in Southern Manitoba; as well as many individual mounds at various points on the open prairie. The finest mound in the whole province belongs to the latter class, and is known as Calf Mountain. It is built on a natural hillock, and in the shape of a beehive. The artificial part of it is 285 feet in circumference at the base, 14 feet high and 21 across the top, its total elevation being 23 feet above the prairie level. It has a graded approach on the west side leading to a transverse ridge, which gives it the appearance of an effigy mound. It is located on section 6, township 3 and range 7 west, about two miles to the south of Darlingford station, and stands 1536 feet above the sea, near the middle of a wide but shallow trough in the Pembina Mountains, with a regular succession of terraced hills rising from 30 to 60 feet on all sides of it. Some parties from the neighboring town of Manitou, last fall, ran a trench, six feet deep, right through the centre of it, but found only a number of buffalo-heads and a few skeletons of recent burials close to the surface.

On the banks of the Rainy River, a little beyond the eastern limits of the province, there is what may be called an international group of

mounds, some of them being on each side of the river, which there forms the boundary line between Canada and the United States. Copper relics have been found in these mounds, but not in any of the others here, except the copper bands that encircled the skulls of modern Indians buried in the Souris mounds, as we have seen.

So far, I regret to say, our limited investigation of the mounds in the Canadian Northwest has thrown very little if any new light on the unsolved problems connected with their builders. But it would appear, from the foregoing facts, and from other observations I have made here:—1. That these Mound-builders did not come in by the north, but were probably outlying colonies from the more populous settlements in the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio: especially as tropical shells have often been found in their tombs, but no relics from a region more northerly than that in which the mounds are built. 2. That, with the exception of Calf Mountain, no one of the mounds in Manitoba, that I have seen, is very large or remarkable in any way, which may possibly indicate that they were built by a simple people, who were fewer and poorer than their more fortunate kindred farther south.

The field for archæological research in the Canadian Northwest is very extensive, and as yet is practically untouched.

A. McCHARLES.

Winnipeg, Canada,
January 31, 1887.